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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Questions relating to information

Macroeconomic policy questions

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Environment and sustainable development

Operational activities for development

International drug control

Letter dated 16 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairperson of the Contact Group of the States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) to the United Nations I have the honour to transmit the text of the Almaty Declaration, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the States members of ECO at its fifth summit meeting, held at Almaty on 11 May 1998.

I would be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly under agenda items 20, 34, 38, 89, 95, 97, 98, 99 and 104.

(*Signed*) Akmaral Kh. **Arystanbekova**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
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Annex

Almaty Declaration, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the States members of the Economic Cooperation Organization at its fifth summit meeting, held at Almaty on 11 May 1998

[Original: English and Russian]

The Fifth Summit Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 11 May, 1998. The Meeting presided over by His Excellency Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, was attended by:-

- H.E. Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani,
  President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan;
- H.E. Mr. Mr. Artur Rasizade,
  Prime Minister of the Azerbaijan Republic;
- H.E. Mr. Seyed Mohammad Khatami,
  President of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
- H.E. Mr. Askar Akaev,
  President of the Kyrgyz Republic;
- H.E. Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif,
  Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan;
- H.E. Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov,
  President of the Republic of Tajikistan;
- H.E. Mr. Suleyman Demirel,
  President of the Republic of Turkey;
- H.E. Mr. Saparmurat Niyazov,
  President of Turkmenistan; and
- H.E. Mr. Islam Karimov,
  President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Heads of State/Government held, in a cordial and friendly atmosphere, indepth exchange of views on important regional and global issues of common interest with a view to promoting the socio-economic well-being of the peoples of the ECO region. In this context, the Heads of State/Government:

Bearing in mind the aims and objectives of ECO and other provisions of its Charter, the Treaty of Izmir;

Reaffirming their resolve to promote the welfare of the peoples of the Member States through enhanced cooperation within the framework of Economic Cooperation Strategy containing the main elements of Quetta Plan of Action and Almaty Outline Plan for the development of transport sector in ECO region by pursuing the stipulated goals in the priority areas of trade, transport and communications and energy;

Recalling the Tehran Communique of the First ECO Summit Meeting held in February 1992, the Joint Communique and Declaration adopted by the Second ECO Summit Meeting held in Istanbul in July 1993, the Joint Communique and Islamabad Declaration of the Third ECO Summit Meeting held in Islamabad in March 1995, the Ashgabat Declaration of the Fourth ECO Summit Meeting held in Ashgabat in May 1996, and the Ashgabat Declaration on the development of Transport and Communication Infrastructure and Network of Transnational Pipelines in the ECO Region of the Extraordinary Summit Meeting held in Ashgabat in May 1997;

Conscious of the new developments taking place around the world and the crucial role of ECO region in the new millennium with its geo-strategic position, rich natural resources and vast combined economic potential;

Recalling UN General Assembly Resolution 52/20 of 20 November 1997 incorporating the world body's acknowledgement of ECO's goals and objectives with the potential and resources of its Member States as a "permanent body for intra-regional cooperation, consultation and coordination in order to enhance economic, social and cultural development", emphasizing the need for various agencies of UN system to join efforts towards the implementation of economic projects and programmes of ECO;

Noting with satisfaction the Resolution adopted in the Eighth Summit Meeting of OIC held in Tehran in December 1997 aimed at enhancing cooperation between OIC and ECO and bringing about better

coordination and efficient implementation of their respective projects and programmes;

Taking Note of the Report of the Secretary General of ECO on the activities of the Organization since the last Extraordinary Summit Meeting held in Ashgabat in May 1997;

1. ENDORSED the decisions taken at the Seventh and Eighth Meetings of the ECO Council of Ministers held respectively in Tehran in April 1997 and in Almaty in May 1998;

2. UNDERLINED the urgency to focus attention on the priority areas for cooperation and urged the Member States to ensure their participation and implementation of projects and programmes by, inter alia, including them in their respective national plans and/or through bilateral and regional arrangements;

3. REITERATED their resolve to complete the remaining necessary formalities to put ECO Trade and Development Bank and ECO Reinsurance Company into operation in 1998, and welcomed the readiness of Central Asian Bank and other concerned financial institutions of ECO Member States to cooperate with these institutions;

4. URGED the signatory Member States to expedite the procedures for the early establishment and operationalization of other ECO institutions (ECO Air, ECO Science Foundation, ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Educational Institute) and called upon them to undertake the required actions regarding the ECO Shipping Company which is already operational;

5. REEMPHASIZED the importance of Transport and Communications Sectors and called upon the Member States to implement the decisions taken at the Extraordinary ECO Summit Meeting held in Ashgabat in May 1997 and the Almaty Outline Plan for development of transport sector in the ECO region;

6. WELCOMED the signing of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement and endorsed the recommendations made by Ministers of Transport and Communications during their Second Meeting in Ashgabat in March 1998;

7. WELCOMED the readiness of Kazakhstan to annually hold international conferences on transit-transport potential of the ECO region;

8. NOTED the progress made by the Member Countries in linking their telecommunications systems with the Trans-Asia-Europe Fiber Optic Cable System (TAEFOS) and called upon them to enhance their cooperation in other areas of telecommunication as well by expanding their telecommunications channels and satellite links and joint production of telecommunication equipment within the ECO region so as to make the communications more efficient in the whole region;

9. WELCOMED the entry into force of the Transit Trade Agreement, Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for the Businessmen of ECO Countries and the establishment of Transit Trade Committee in Ashgabat and noted with satisfaction their potential contribution for trade facilitation and flow of goods within the ECO Region and invited the remaining Member States to join these Agreements;

10. ALSO WELCOMED the signing of MOU on Cooperation Against Smuggling and Customs Frauds among the Member States aimed at providing and creating facilities for achieving progress in relation to the smooth flow of goods and passenger traffic and called upon the Member States to cooperate in order to combat smuggling of goods, narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and Customs frauds;

11. WELCOMED the approval by the Council of Ministers of the Resolution with regard to Strengthening the Measures for Monitoring the International Trade in Precursors which are used in the Illicit Manufacture of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances;

12. ENCOURAGED the Member Countries who have not joined yet the World Trade Organization (WTO) to take necessary steps to do so;

13. CALLED UPON the Member States to consider the possibility of liberalizing their trade regimes vis-a-vis one another with a view to increasing and expanding intra-regional trade;

14. APPRECIATED the 2nd ECO Trade Fair held in Bishkek in October 1997, encouraged other Member States to hold similar trade fairs and exhibitions and called upon them to participate in the international trade fairs to be held in ECO Member States;

15. RECOGNIZED the importance of the role of private sector in regional economic development, acknowledging the important role being played by ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry in this regard and extended full support to the ongoing process of structural adjustment and privatization in the Region;

16. CALLED UPON the Member States to enhance mutual cooperation in the agricultural and industrial sectors and recommended to them and ECO Secretariat to formulate specific proposals/projects in this regard which may be implemented both through joint efforts and/or assistance of, inter alia, FAO and UNIDO;

17. EXPRESSED their appreciation for introduction of changes in agricultural policies and institutional reforms in the Central Asian Member Countries and Azerbaijan for increasing productivity and efficiency in agriculture and export of agricultural products;

18. ALSO STRESSED the importance of timely implementation of the decisions taken during the Extraordinary Summit Meeting held in Ashgabat in May 1997, welcomed the supportive activities in this regard and agreed to consider rendering every possible assistance for energy transit within the framework of ECO;

19. UNDERLINED the growing importance of the environmental issues as well as their increasing impact on the sustainable development of the region and reiterated the need to enhance the protection of environment in the ECO area through regional cooperative measures;

20. WELCOMED the decision of heads of Central Asian States on creation of International Fund on Aral Sea Saving and recommended to ECO Member States to consider the possibility of evolving rehabilitation projects with the financial and technical assistance of donor countries, regional and international financial institutions to the areas which are suffering from the ecological catastrophes including the Aral Sea, Caspian Sea and Sarez Lake basins, the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site, nuclear waste storage and disposal and others;

21. INVITED the relevant regional and international financial institutions and interested countries, in line with the recent UNGA Resolutions to extend their assistance in the implementation of the projects and programmes of ECO, particularly for the development of transport and communications infrastructure providing the ECO landlocked countries with greater mobility to promote intra-regional and inter-regional trade;

22. STRESSED that in the formulation of ECO's programmes of regional cooperation due attention should be paid to address the specific needs of Central Asian Member States and Azerbaijan for the gradual transition of their economies to market-oriented economies;

23. NOTED with satisfaction the recent developments enhancing ECO's cooperation with major Regional and International Institutions within and outside the UN System and called upon the Secretary General to continue his efforts for the promotion of cooperation between ECO and related international fora;

24. WELCOMED the signing of the MOU between ECO and FAO, as well as of the project document with UNDCP, called upon the Member States to help implement the said agreements and also expressed satisfaction on the recent developments between ECO, on the one hand, and OIC and ASEAN, on the other;

25. WELCOMED Pakistan's initiative to host a Central Asia-South Asia Economic Summit (CASA) in Islamabad in September 1998 in collaboration with the World Economic Forum, providing a useful opportunity to ECO Member States' leaders and business community to highlight the potentials and promises of their countries to the participants from the international business and financial community;

26. REQUESTED ECO Member States who have already been invited to participate in the CASA Conference at the highest possible level;

27. NOTED with appreciation the progress made with regard to the restructuring and reorganization of ECO Secretariat and urged the Member States to provide necessary assistance, for the effective functioning of the Secretariat;

28. EXPRESSED their appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for allocating a modern building to the ECO Secretariat to enable it to function in a more suitable working environment;

29. ACCEPTED with thanks the offer of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to host the Sixth ECO Summit Meeting in Bishkek in the first half of the year 2000.

The participating Heads of State/Government expressed their gratitude and profound appreciation to the President, Government and the people of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to them during their stay in Almaty and for the excellent arrangements made for the Summit Meeting.